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Watson Introduces Comprehensive Legislation to Strengthen Federal Information Security Policy

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Washington, D.C. --Congresswoman Diane E. Watson – Chairwoman of the Government Management, Organization, and Procurement Subcommittee—announced today that she has introduced new legislation—The Federal Information Security Management Act of 2010 (H.R. 4900)-- that amends the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002. H.R. 4900 contains a combination of provisions designed to strengthen and harmonize the federal government's efforts to ensure the integrity of its information infrastructure.

Specifically, H.R. 4900:

- Establishes a National Office for Cyberspace within the Executive Office of the President;
- Requires that the Director of the National Office for Cyberspace, to be appointed by the President, shall be subject to Senate confirmation;
- Revamps FISMA reporting requirements, requiring agencies to utilize new and automated monitoring and measuring capabilities to assess their vulnerabilities to cyber threats;
- Instructs OMB and agencies to incorporate information security into their procurement decisions.

“Cyber threats against the Federal Government, as well as the U.S. Congress, have grown exponentially over the last year,” stated Chairwoman Watson. “Congress and other government agencies are now under a cyber attack an average of 1.8 billion times a month. The magnitude of the problem indicates that we must take this issue much more seriously if we want to sufficiently protect against and avert the potential for a major cyber meltdown within the federal government that could have far-reaching national security and economic implications. The fact that GAO’s latest report to Congress finds that 23 out of 24 agencies still have significant weaknesses in their agency wide information security programs is an indication to me that we need to devote more attention and resources to this issue.”

I believe H.R. 4900 provides us a way forward to reducing our cyber risk across the agency community while instilling policy leadership on cybersecurity at the highest levels of our government.”

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